

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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SECURITY INFORMATION

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COUNTRY USSR (Latvian SSR)

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SUBJECT Port of Ventspils

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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

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1. The entrance to Ventspils (N57-23, E21-33) harbor appears to be mined, for ships must enter the port through a narrow channel which permits passage of only one ship at a time. A trawler is permanently stationed at the mouth of this channel, which is marked with buoys. The harbor extends in an east-west direction along the mouth of the Venta River, and its capacity is increased by two long breakwaters. Port installations are constructed along both sides of the channel and mouth of the river, but only the north side of the harbor is used by commercial vessels. The entire southern sector of the port is reserved for use by the Soviet Navy.

2. Approximately 150 meters from the channel, and some 500 meters on the north side of the entrance to the port, is located a newly-constructed wooden observation tower. This tower appeared to be about 40 meters high. A new factory is being built near this tower, between it and the Ventspils railroad station. The factory building is already roofed, but is not yet in use. Machinery which is to be used in the building is around the building awaiting installation.

3. There are at least 23 diesel-motored cranes in the northern, or commercial, sector of the port, which has railroad connections with the Ventspils railroad station. Various storehouses and buildings are located in this same sector of the port. During the five days in port [redacted] only two merchant ships, the BELOOSTROV, and a small Polish vessel [redacted]

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4. [redacted] three Soviet submarines tied up in the southern part of the harbor. Two of the submarines were moored together and appeared to be identical. They were dark grey and had sharp, saw-like bows. Each had an artillery piece located on the foredeck in front of the turret, and from the turret of each submarine there extended a tube which seemed to be about one meter high and was approximately as thick as a man's leg.

The third sub-

marine, moored about thirty meters from the other submarines, was smaller than the other two. It also was grey, and had an artillery piece mounted on its turret. [redacted]

these three submarines resembled

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German submarines

they appeared to be

constructed in the Soviet Union, using German plans.

5. Fifteen naval trawlers were tied up at the pier which extends into the harbor, near the submarines. All appeared to be the same type of trawler that the Polish Navy uses in Gdynia.¹

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6. About thirty additional trawlers were moored approximately 200 meters east of the submarines. These trawlers were tied up in groups of four [redacted] they were minelayers and minesweepers. These ships resemble the vessel which is permanently stationed at the entrance to the Ventspils channel.

[redacted] the trawler which guards the entrance resembled German trawlers [redacted] seen during the war. This trawler appeared to be about 45 meters long, and [redacted] it would take a crew of about 40 men. It had one fairly large gun on the foredeck, two multi-barreled, anti-aircraft guns amidships, and a smaller gun on the poopdeck. Other equipment on the deck was covered

The trawler

had a slip for dropping mines at the stern.

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7.

8.

9. Ventspils appeared to be dirty and extremely poor. There were few food shops, and [redacted] long queues waiting in front of some of the food stores. There 50X1-HUM appeared to be a shortage of fresh meat, fresh fish, dried meat, sausages, and smoked fish, but [redacted] there were plentiful supplies of dried fish. Cheap vodka was sold at street kiosks. The civilian population was poorly dressed, and 50X1-HUM appeared to avoid all contact with the foreign seamen. [redacted]

[redacted] older Soviet officers with high rank [redacted] observed on the streets, though it appeared that they did not have their families in the area with them. There were fewer younger officers and almost no enlisted men on the streets. [redacted] almost no young men or women between the ages of 17 and 22 years. [redacted] younger officers, enlisted men, and others in this age group must have been on duty or at work [redacted] the original Latvian population appeared to have been deported from Ventspils. Russian was the language most often spoken on the streets.

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1. [redacted] Comment: [redacted] these trawlers may be vessels which fell to the Soviet Union after the war, especially since they resemble Polish trawlers. In 1946, the Soviet Union gave some trawlers of this type to the Polish Navy.

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